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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/671,170	09/25/2003	Mark A. Willett	MEII 0215 PUS	7009
22045	7590	11/05/2004	EXAMINER	
BROOKS KUSHMAN P.C. 1000 TOWN CENTER TWENTY-SECOND FLOOR SOUTHFIELD, MI 48075			BONCK, RODNEY H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3681	

DATE MAILED: 11/05/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/671,170

Applicant(s)

WILLETT ET AL.

Examiner

Rodney H. Bonck

Art Unit

3681

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/25/03.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

The following is a first action on the merits of application Serial No.10/671,170, filed September 25, 2003.

Information Disclosure Statement

Receipt is acknowledged of the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 25, 2003. The cited documents have been considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-7, 9, 10, and 17-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Reed('538). Reed discloses a coupling assembly comprising a housing 18 having a retainer 40, a coupling pack 10,17,11, and an actuator lever 35 that is pivotable with respect to the housing. The retainer 40 inhibits axial movement of the end of the actuator lever. The retainer 40 is a T-shaped aperture, receiving a T-shaped projection on the end of the lever 35 (see Figs. 2 and 3). A retaining member 36 retains a portion of the end of the lever in the second portion of the aperture. Reed further provides an actuator device 30 for pivoting the actuator lever 35.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reed('538) in view of Bliss('568). This claim requires that the actuator lever have first and second projections that extend into first and second retainer apertures. In Reed, the lever has only a single projection. Bliss discloses a coupling assembly having a housing 21, a coupling pack 18,24,27, and actuator levers 43. Each lever has a pair of projections 41 received in the splines of the housing. It would have been obvious to

provide a pair of projections on each lever in the Reed device, the motivation being to distribute the stresses on the lever projections during actuation.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Howard('574) in view of Prater(US 2004/0035668 A1). Howard discloses a coupling assembly comprising an annular housing 18, a coupling pack 26, and a plurality of actuator levers 30. The levers are retained by separate retaining members 34,35. Prater discloses a housing for a coupling assembly having retainer opening formed by deformations 42 in the inwardly extending splines. It would have been obvious to make the housing of Howard from sheet material such that the retainers could be formed in the housing splines as taught by Prater, the motivation being to eliminate the need for separate retainers.

Claims 12-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Howard('574) in view of Prater(US 2004/0035668 A1) as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of Reed('538). In further view of Reed it would have been obvious to provide T-shaped opening in the housing and T-shaped projections on the levers extending through the housing openings, the motivation being to pivotally mount and retain the levers on the housing.

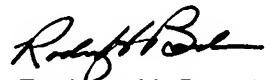
Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Good et al.('619) is cited to show retainer openings 55 in clutch housing 50. Bauer('847), Nakayama et al.('953), Ahlen('904), Ross('549), Shiber('478), and Fukuda(JP 63-214524 A) show other lever-actuated coupling assemblies.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rodney H. Bonck whose telephone number is (703)-308-2904. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:00AM - 3:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Charles A. Marmor can be reached on (703)-308-0830. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Rodney H. Bonck
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3681

rhb
November 3, 2004